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MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA , March 13, 1865.

To the Senate and House of Representatives :

I herewith transmit for your information, copies of the correspondence referred to in my message of this date, in regard to the proposed conference to adjust terms of peace by means of a military convention.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

LETTER OF GENERAL R. E. LEE.

HEADQUARTERS C. S. ARMIES,
2d March, 1865.

Lt. Gen. U. S. Grant, commanding U. S. Armies :

General :—Lt. Gen. Longstreet has informed me that, in a recent conversation between himself and Major General Ord, as to the possibility of arriving at a satisfactory adjustment of the present unhappy difficulties, by means of a military convention, Gen. Ord stated that if I desired to have an interview with you on the subject, you would not decline, provided I had authority to act. Sincerely desiring to leave nothing untried which may put an end to the calamities of war, I propose to meet you at such convenient time and place as you may designate, with the hope that upon an interchange of views, it may be found practicable to submit the subjects of controversy between the belligerents to a convention of the kind mentioned.

In such event, I am authorized to do whatever the result of the proposed interview may render necessary or advisable. Should you accede to this proposition, I would suggest that, if agreeable to you, we meet at the place selected by Generals Ord and Longstreet for the interview, at 11 A. M., on Monday next.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) R. E. LEE, General.

Official copy :
(Signed) C. S. VENABLE, A. A. G.
Headquarters, March 7, 1865.

LETTER OF GENERAL U. S. GRANT

HEADQUARTERS ARMIES U. S.,
March 4, 1865.

Gen. R. E. Lee, commanding C. S. Armies :

General :—Your two letters of the 20th inst., were received yesterday. In regard to any apprehended misunderstanding in reference to the exchange of political prisoners, I think there need be none. Gen. Ord or Gen. Longstreet have probably misunderstood what I said to the former on the subject, or I may have failed to make myself understood, possibly. A few days before the interview between Generals Longstreet and Ord, I had received a dispatch from Gen. Huffman, Commissary Gen. of prisoners, stating in substance that all prisoners of war who were or had been in close confinement or irons, whether under charges or sentence, had been ordered to City Point for exchange. I forwarded the substance of that dispatch to Lieut. Col. Mulford, Asst. Agent of Exchange, and presumed it probable that he had communicated it to Col. Ro. Ould. A day or two after, an offender, who was neither a prisoner of war nor a political prisoner, was executed, after a fair and impartial trial, and in accordance with the laws of war and the usage of civilized nations. It was in explanation of this class of cases I told Gen. Ord to speak to Gen. Longstreet.

Reference to my letter of February 16th will show my understanding on the subject of releasing political or citizen prisoners.

In regard to meeting you on the 6th inst., I would state that I have no authority to accede to your proposition for a conference on the subject proposed. Such authority is vested in the President of the United States alone.

Gen. Ord could only have meant that I would not refuse an interview on any subject which I have a right to act; which, of course, would be such as are purely of a military character, and on the subject of exchange, which has been entrusted to me.

I have the honor to be

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

(Signed) U. S. GRANT, Lieut. Gen.

LETTER OF THE PRESIDENT.

RICHMOND, VA., February 28th, 1865.

Gen. R. E. Lee, commanding, &c., &c.

General :—You will learn by the letter of Gen. Longstreet, the

result of his second interview with Gen. Ord. The point as to whether yourself or Gen. Grant should invite the other to a confenence, is not worth discussing. If you think the statements of Gen. Ord render it probably useful that the conference suggested should be had, you will proceed as you may prefer, and are clothed with all the supplemental authority you may need in the consideration of any proposition for a military convention, or the appointment of a commissioner to enter into such an arrangement as will cause at least temporary suspension of hostilities.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) JEFFERSON DAVIS.

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